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ABSTRACT

This guide discusses using Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to find out why a student is behaving inappropriately and to enable the provision of appropriate positive behavior intervention. It stresses that a FBA goes beyond looking at antecedent behavior and consequence to review everything in the entire environment of the student. Components of the FBA are explained and include: (1) identifying the area of the behavior that is the greatest concern; (2) identifying where the behavior occurs and does not occur; (3) investigating what happened in the student's environment before the student started having the behavior; (4) examining whether a pattern exists; (5) investigating when the behavior occurs; (6) identifying what the student is getting out of having the behavior; (7) reasons why the student is having the behavior; and (8) identifying replacement appropriate behaviors that can be taught to the student to replace inappropriate behaviors. The guide closes with a copy of "Technical Assistance for Implementation of the Behavior Intervention Process" provided by the Office of Exceptional Children, Ohio Department of Education. This document explains behavior intervention plans and provides a systematic collaborative problem-solving process to guide behavior intervention planning. (CR)

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ED 466 922

What is a Functional Behavior

Assessment?



The "WHY" of a Behavior

EC 309070

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The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that serves families of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities in Ohio, and agencies who provide services to them. OCECD works through the coalition efforts of the 58 disability organizations which comprise the Coalition.

Established in 1972 and staffed primarily by parents of children and adults with disabilities, persons with disabilities, and education professionals, the Coalition mission is to ensure that every Ohio child with special needs receives a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment to enable that child to reach his/her highest potential. Throughout Ohio, the Coalition's services reach families of children and youth with all disabilities.

OCECD's programs help parents become informed and effective representatives for their children in all educational settings. In addition, youth are assisted to become their own self-advocates. Through knowledge about laws, resources, rights and responsibilities, families are better able to work with agencies to ensure that appropriate services are received for the benefit of their sons and daughters.

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Technical assistance to **parent mentor projects** of the Ohio Department of Education is provided through statewide meetings, retreats, site visits and telephone consultations.

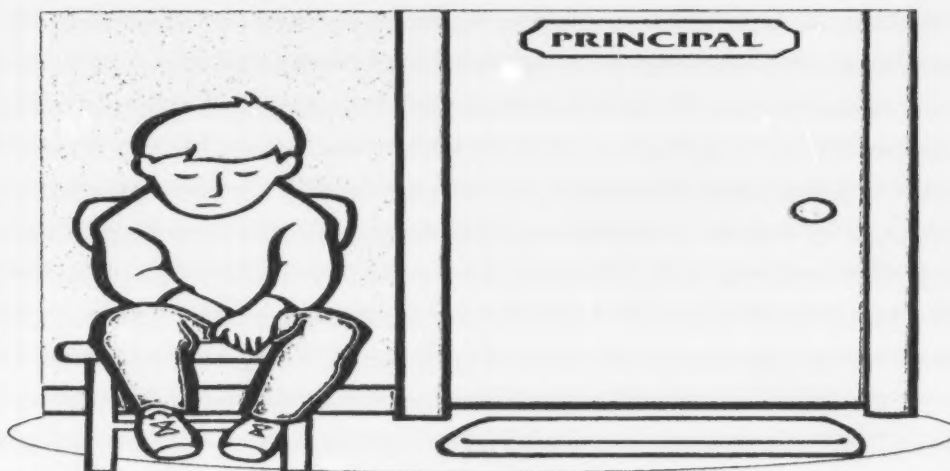
Parent Training and Information Center

Project – Disseminates information to at least 500,000 parents, professionals, and members of the public regarding disability issues. Publishes the FORUM newsletter with subscriber support. Trains parent leaders from diverse parent organizations across the state to support families and to provide personal assistance.

It's My Turn – Curriculum that promotes increased capacity of youth with disabilities to make choices and to advocate for themselves. Students gain the competencies to learn, work, live, and recreate in the community.

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In the reauthorization of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) of 1997 there was a major focus on Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). During the reauthorization process there were numerous debates between parents of children with disabilities and educational professionals. The parents felt many students were not receiving an education because they were being suspended and expelled from school too often and for too many days. Administrators felt they needed to suspend and expel students with disabilities to keep school districts safe. During reauthorization of IDEA both sides came to an agreement that the district could be doing more in the area of positive behavior interventions. The tool the law requires schools to use to find out what interventions need to be done is a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). Using the FBA to find out "Why" the student is having the behavior, and putting appropriate interventions in place could eliminate most, if not all, major behaviors in the classroom. When positive interventions are done correctly the child replaces inappropriate behaviors with more appropriate ones. When a FBA is done and appropriate interventions are used, the student benefits by developing the skills needed for an independent life after high school.

Research supports positive behavior intervention. It shows that punishment does nothing to decrease behavior. Punishment does not teach the student anything. Unfortunately in a lot of school districts punishment is presently the most common form of behavioral intervention. This form of intervention does not work; it does not replace the inappropriate behavior with a more appropriate behavior.

Here is an example of the differences between positive behavior intervention and punishment.

Behavior

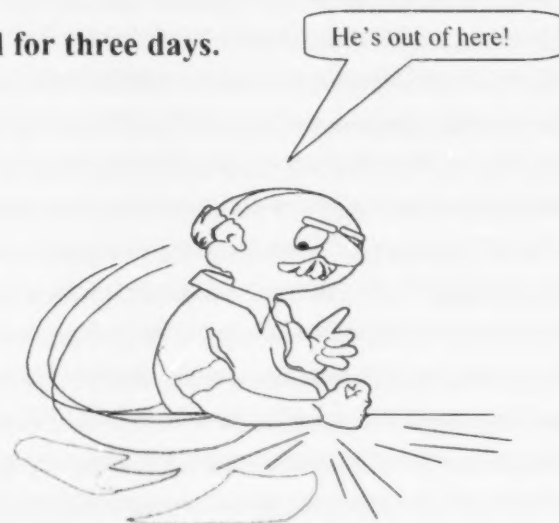
The student is skipping school.

- *Punishment*

The student is suspended from school for three days.

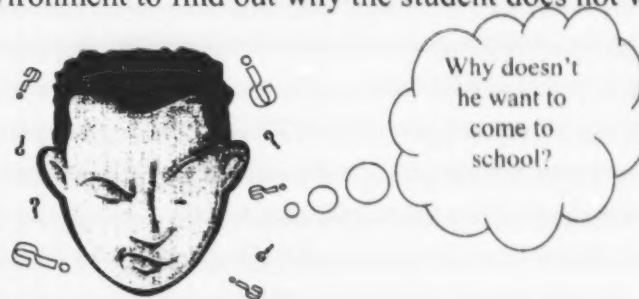
- *Positive intervention*

The student will attend school 1/2 hour earlier and 1/2 hour later than the rest of the students.



Notice in the first example the student is having his behavior reinforced. In the second example the student is staying in school and is receiving an education. This student is not in control of the situation and the consequence is not reinforcing the behavior.

The next step would then be to conduct a FBA to find out **WHY** the student is having the behavior. In the example above we don't know why the student is skipping school. A FBA takes information from all areas of the student's environment to find out why the student does not want to go to school.



To better understand why public school systems tend to use punishment over discipline you need to have a little history. Back when the institution of schools first started children worked on the farm and families needed everyone to help with the chores. When the children were old enough each child had their own responsibilities. The older the child the more responsibilities. When the government mandated that children go to school this was a way of escaping these responsibilities. It also gave them a way of achieving a better life. Even back then children asked "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?" The fact of the matter is that students wanted to be in school because of what it could give them. A way to a better life style. You may be thinking the same thing is true today. Children who go to school today also receive an education for a better life. But today students have the Internet, TV, and access to transportation. Not as many live on farms, have chores or responsibilities. They consider school a waste of their time. Society is not what it was in the 1900's. The make up of the family is vastly different. Our children today deal with far more than we ever did.

Today, many schools are not safe. Drugs and violence are common, every day experiences in some school environments. Children have to make life-altering choices before they have the mental abilities to do so.

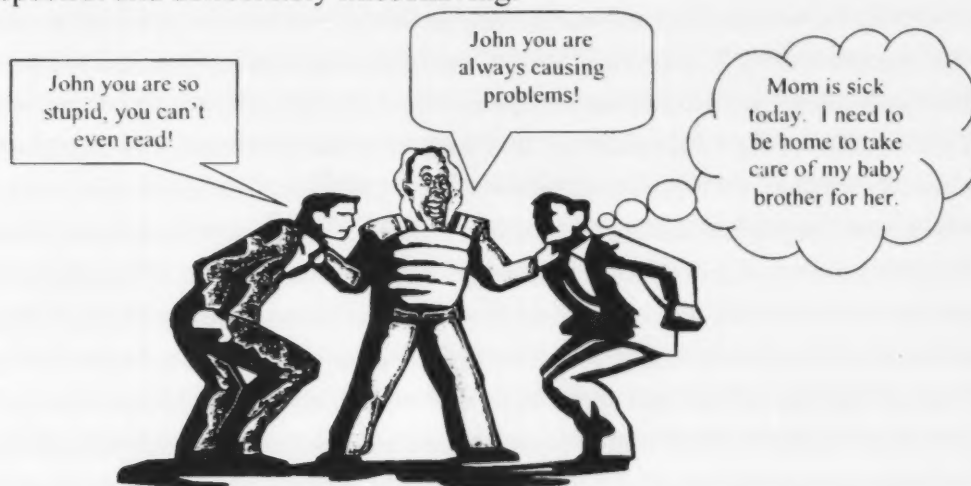
This is partly because of TV and the Internet. Students who are in middle and high school still do not have good reasoning skills. If school is not interesting to them or they do not see value in what they are learning, they are not going to put forth any effort. We also know from research that if students do not feel safe in their learning environment they will have a much harder time learning. If a student is not successful at something they will do everything they can to avoid it. Therefore, if they are not seeing success in school or they do not feel safe they may develop behaviors to avoid being there.

The functional behavior assessment can find out what is going on with the student. Is the student not feeling safe? Why is the student not being successful?

The results of an FBA provide the first step to understanding that THE CHILD IS NOT THE PROBLEM----THE CHILD HAS PROBLEMS. Once the FBA is done we have the information needed to develop an individual behavior modification plan that fits the individual needs of the student having the behavior.

Hopefully this publication will clear up any questions on FBA.

When we are looking at the student as "BEING THE PROBLEM" and not at "WHY" the student is doing the behavior, it brings up a negative perspective. A parent or teacher will think the student is being mean, disrespectful and deliberately misbehaving.



Once these thoughts arise, the parent or teacher may have feelings of anger. The knee jerk reaction to this is to threaten the student. "DO THIS OR ELSE" which is always followed up with a punishment. The problem with looking at the student/child as the problem is that it starts a never-ending cycle. Behavior, threaten, punish, behavior, threaten, punish.....!



When behavior interferes with the student's learning, a FBA should be done. Under IDEA 97, once a student misses 10 accumulative days of school the school system is required by law to do a Functional Behavior Assessment. Ten accumulative days mean any time the student is taken out of the learning environment. If the student is sent to the Principal's office for 2 hours, that 2 hours is added to the 10 days. If an average school day is 5 1/2 hours a day and the student has been sent to the principal's office 3 times for 2 hours each time, it counts as over 1 day out of the learning environment. The reason the law is set up this way is to make sure the student is being exposed to the general education curriculum. When a student has a disability they are already struggling in school. When students are taken out of the learning environment this only adds to their frustration and increases behaviors, the very same behaviors we are trying to avoid.

Let's go back and look at a positive way to view behavior. When a student has a behavior and we have done a FBA we learn why the student is having the behavior. We don't see the student as the problem. We see the student as having a problem. The student still feels mad and frustrated but we know he is not having the behavior to be mean. The teacher, knowing what is causing the behavior, can be empathetic and understanding instead of threatening the student. The teacher then can give support to replace the inappropriate behavior with appropriate behaviors. Remember a positive behavior intervention plan must teach, not punish.

Example:

John comes into Ms. Jones' class every morning upset. He does not come into the room without pushing and shoving students around him. He has a hard time sitting in his seat and getting ready for the day. Ms. Jones can look at this situation two ways.

1. John is the problem or 2. John has a problem.

Ms. Jones decides to do a Functional Behavior Assessment. What she finds is that Mom and Dad are getting divorced and on the way to school every day an older student is taking John's lunch money. When John gets to school he feels out of control. His world is falling apart and he has no control over the situation. After the FBA is done the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team will meet and provide John with counseling at school. John's lunch money is mailed to the school, and Mom and Dad set up private counseling for the family to help John cope with the divorce.



Let's look at another situation. Alex is coming to class without his homework an average of 2 times a week. The teacher knows that Alex is a bright young man and chooses the route of punishment. She sends him to the principal's office every time he forgets his homework. While he is in the principal's office he is missing the general education curriculum. When Alex goes back to class he can't understand the lessons because he has missed the instruction. To compensate he becomes the class clown and disrupts the class. The teacher tries yelling, putting him in time-out, and even tries ignoring him. Alex just keeps getting further and further behind in his lessons. He doesn't even bother to try to get his homework done. Finally, when he does not get the reaction he wants, his frustration level grows. His behavior then changes, causing him to start showing aggression toward the other students.

one school day is 6 hours suspended from school for 3 days sent to principal's office 22 times for 2 hours each

The average school day is 6 hours. If the student has been sent to the principal's office 22 times for 2 hours each time, the student would have missed an equivalent of 7 school days and 3 hours. When you add in the 3 days suspension the student has missed over 10 days and 3 hours of school. The district is required to do a FBA to find out WHY the student is having the behavior.

When the Functional Behavior Assessment was done the IEP team put a positive behavior intervention plan in place. Part of the plan was to give Alex one-on-one tutoring. The data from the FBA showed the aggressive behavior was an avoidance behavior. He had gotten so far behind his peers he did not want to be in school. The team also placed him on an award system for good behavior. The FBA also showed that he needed to develop strategies to help him get his homework to school. The tutor would check his assignment book and initial it. In the evening after mom helped with the homework, she signed the assignment book. Alex put his homework in folders and made sure the homework was in his backpack.

What the FBA gave the team was the "WHY" of Alex's behaviors. With the information from the FBA, a positive intervention plan could be put in place to teach Alex the skills needed to be successful.

What if, in the beginning, the IEP team had met and they had put an organizational goal on his IEP? This would have provided Alex with the supports he needed before his behaviors got out of hand.

Remember that IDEA '97 states: ANY TIME A STUDENT'S BEHAVIOR INTERFERES WITH THE LEARNING OF THE STUDENT OR THAT OF HIS PEERS IT MUST BE ADDRESSED ON THE IEP.

Is disorganization considered to be a behavior? Most people would answer "NO", but let me ask you this:

- *What happens to a student when he forgets his homework?
- *What happens if a student forgets to bring materials to class?

Usually the student receives an incomplete for his homework, and a detention for not being prepared for class.

If this continues to happen the student will be suspended. Detention and suspension are disciplinary actions. The student will be missing school and this will interfere with the student's educational progress. Any time disorganization interferes with learning it must be addressed on the student's IEP.

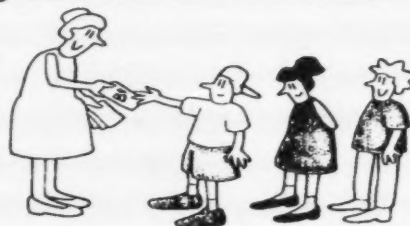
The key to positive behavior intervention is to do intervention to prevent the behavior from occurring. In order to do this, you have to know why the student is having the behavior.

The **behavior** does not always match up to the **why**.

Example: If Ann hits Mary in reading class this does not mean that Ann does not like Mary. By doing an FBA we might find out that Ann is embarrassed to read out loud because her reading level is too low. She would rather be sent to the principal's office than be embarrassed in front of her peers.

The definition of positive behavior intervention is a behavior plan that teaches the student something (hopefully a more appropriate behavior) and it must intervene before the student has an inappropriate behavior.

Remember earlier when we were talking about Alex not turning in his homework? Instead of punishing him he could have been given supports and organizational strategies to build his organizational skills that would assist him with his schoolwork.



Brain based research tells us that young adults have not developed the frontal lobes of the brain. This is where we develop the skills to plan ahead and make decisions. A lot of children with disabilities lack the necessary ability to have organizational skills. Instead of punishing these students, we need to teach them strategies to achieve the same results, such as getting their homework handed in on time.

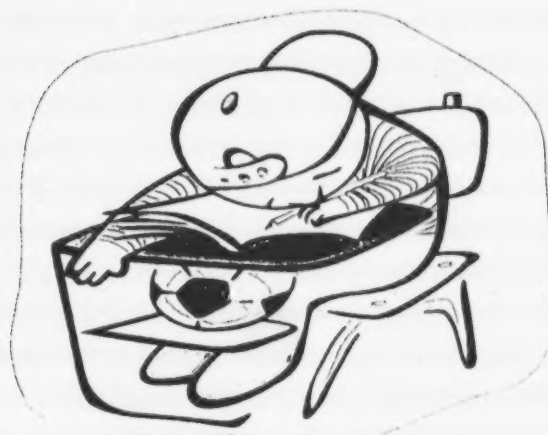
When we are looking at doing a FBA we need to do more than just look at the ABC's of behavior (Antecedent, Behavior, and Consequence). A functional behavior assessment needs to go much farther than this. Looking only at what happened prior to a behavior is not good enough. A FBA takes in everything in the entire environment of the student. What happened:

- What happened immediately before the behavior?
- What happened that morning?
- What happened the night before?
- What happened last week?
- What happened at home?
- What happened at school?
- What happened in a structured situation?
- What happened in an unstructured situation?
- How does he act around his peers?
- Who was the student with when the behavior occurred?

This is only naming a few of the many areas that need to be addressed on the FBA.

A FBA takes in every who, what, when, where, how of the student from the time he wakes up in the morning to the time he goes to sleep at night. It is so critical to understand the importance of the student's parents, friends, siblings, grandparents, neighbors; no stone should be left unturned. Anything in the student's environment can change their behavior.

WHO HOW WHAT WHERE
WHO HOW WHAT
HOW WHEN WHO WHAT
HOW WHEN WHO WHAT



Another example: We have a student, Jim, who has been identified with specific learning disabilities and has started having behaviors in class. He goes to sleep half way through math class. He had been doing fine in this class and there is no consistency to his behavior which lasts about one week a month. The IEP team meets and decides to do a FBA. Jim comes from a two-parent family. He has one sibling, a brother, and does not seem to have any emotional issues.

The team met and there were numerous observations done on him. Jim was observed in structured situations like math and government class and unstructured situations like gym class. His family stated nothing new was going on with the family. No one had died, and the parents had a good relationship with their children and each other. At school the teachers could not find any rhyme or reason for his behaviors. He had a physical check up and the doctor gave him a clean bill of health. The team decided to get together when the observations had been completed. As the team sat around the table and discussed their findings they were all baffled as to why the student was shutting down every 3rd week of the month. As the team talked, Jim's brother came into the meeting to let his mother know that Dad was running late because he overslept. The father was a fireman and every third week of the month he had to work 3rd shift. Could this have something to do with Jim's behavior? The team discussed the possibility of the relationship, but Mom assured everyone Dad had worked this schedule since Jim had been small and this was nothing new. The brother then stated that Jim had been a big baby ever since he watched the movie *Friday the Thirteenth* 6 months earlier. This is the time the behaviors started occurring.

The team finally came to the conclusion that Jim could not sleep soundly if Dad was out of the house at night. Since every third week Dad worked 3rd shift, he did not sleep well and had a hard time staying awake in math class at the end of the day.

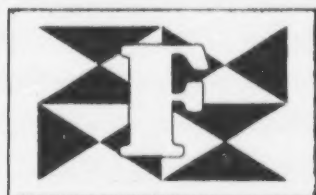
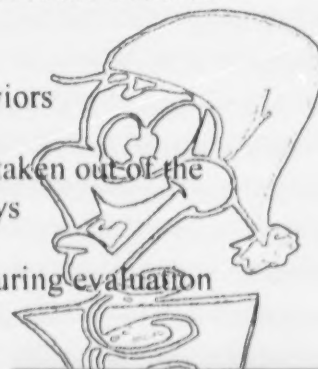
When a FBA is done correctly the team looks at everything. In this case the Father agreed to come home on his lunch hour so Jim would feel safe enough to go to sleep and the behavior of falling asleep in class was not a problem again.

The key to a FBA is to remember to think outside the box. When you are doing a FBA, question the cook, bus driver, grandparent, friend and neighbor.

In this situation the school system could have chosen punishment and given the student detentions and eventually expulsion, but instead they chose to find out why the student was having the behavior.

A functional behavior assessment looks at WHY the student is having a behavior. Remember the student is not the problem; the student has a problem. What is going on with the student and what is happening in the student's environment? A FBA should always:

- *Tell what areas of behavior need to be addressed and guides the decision-making process
- *Help to identify the strategies to teach appropriate behaviors
- *Must be done when a student with a disability has been taken out of the learning environment for more than 10 accumulative days
- *Should be done when there are any behavior concerns during evaluation process



Behavior is a form of communication. The student is trying to tell you something. Sometimes students don't even know why they are having a behavior. When something happens in a student's life that changes their environment they react sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. It can be something as simple as:

- who they are sitting next to
- noise level in the class is louder than usual
- the classroom is hot and stuffy or smells bad
- the home routine was thrown off because mom overslept
- there is a substitute teacher and she doesn't know the class schedule
- peer issues
- teacher interactions
- school work too hard
- school work too easy
- transitions
- how directions are being given
- length of the assignment too overwhelming

STUDENTS HAVE BEHAVIORS FOR A REASON

- Attention
- Approval
- Reward
- To avoid attending school
- To avoid a certain teacher or student
- To avoid doing work

One of the biggest mistakes made is assuming what the student does is related to the reason the student is having the behavior.



Example:

Ann hits Sally. Ann hitting Sally does not always mean Ann does not like Sally. If Ann can't read well and the class is doing oral reading she might choose to hit Sally to avoid reading out loud in class.

John knows if he uses bad language in Mr. Smith's class he will get suspended. He really likes Mr. Smith but does not like going to school.

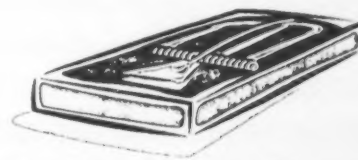
If a functional behavior assessment is done the right way the team will get to the reason WHY the student is having the behavior.

In the past teams only looked at the A, B, C of the behavior.

A-Antecedent (what happened before the behavior occurred)

B-Behavior

C-Consequence



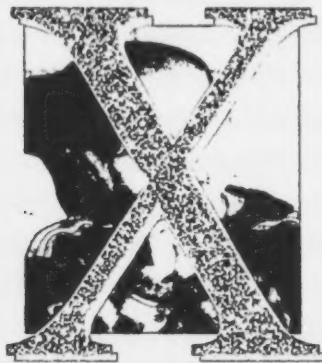
Above if the mouse eats the cheese he will be trapped in the mousetrap. The antecedent would be setting the trap with the cheese. The behavior would be the mouse eating the cheese. The consequence would be the mouse being caught. This is a very simple scenario. Unfortunately, students with behaviors are not simple.

If this mouse were in our home, we would want him to eat the cheese and be caught in the mousetrap. So, the desired behavior would be eating the cheese. What if the mouse did not like cheese? We would have to do a FBA to find out why the mouse was not eating the cheese. When we find out that the mouse does not like cheese we try different foods (interventions) till we find one that works (peanut butter). Then we will get the appropriate behavior (eating the peanut butter) from the mouse and achieve the appropriate outcome (mouse caught in the mousetrap).

We now know that you don't just look at what happened right before the behavior, but what was happening in the student's entire environment.

- What is going on at home?
- What is going on with their friends?
- What is going on in the lunchroom?
- What is going on with the family pet?
- What is going on with Mom and Dad?
- What is happening on the way to school?
- What is going on with their sister/brother?

A FBA is not just a snap shot of the student but an entire picture album.



When a FBA is done correctly, the team does not just look at the A, B, C, or behavior but at:

1. What area of the behavior is the greatest concern?
2. Where does the behavior occur and not occur?
3. What happened in the student's environment before the student started having the behavior?
4. Is there a pattern?
5. Do we know when the behaviors will occur?
6. What is the student getting out of having the behavior?

7. With the information we have attained, what are some reasons why the student is having the behavior?
8. What replacement appropriate behaviors can be taught to the student to replace the inappropriate behaviors?

A student cannot just stop having a behavior without replacing it with another behavior. When a young child has the habit of sucking their thumb, the child will have to replace that behavior with another one. Maybe the child will chew on a toy or a blanket. The same thing will happen when an adult tries to quit smoking. They will replace smoking with another behavior such as eating.

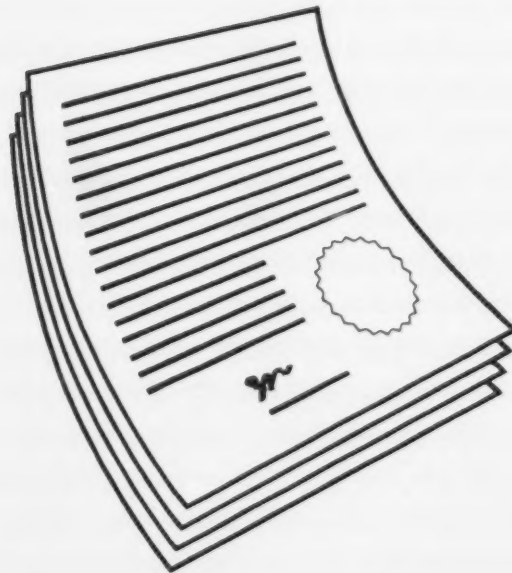
When we know the cause of a behavior, we can plan appropriate interventions. Functional Behavior Assessment is the key to positive behavior interventions. Suspension/expulsion is not the answer to behaviors in school. We must look at why and provide appropriate supports to students so they can reach their fullest potential.



"The task of education is to provide an education for the kinds of kids we have, not the kinds of kids we used to have, or want to have, or the kids that exist in our dreams."

K.P. Gerlach

*The following pages include a copy of
**Technical Assistance for Implementation of
the Behavior Intervention Process** provided by
the Office for Exceptional Children, Ohio
Department of Education. Every school district
has a copy of this document. These pages are to
help the school district and IEP team understand
how to implement a Functional Behavioral
Assessment.*



***Technical Assistance for
Implementation of
the Behavior Intervention Process***

*Functional Behavior Assessment
Behavior Intervention Planning in the IEP
Behavior Intervention Plan Addendum*

**Office for Exceptional Children
Ohio Department of Education
25 South Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4104**

This document is not intended to respond to all of the discipline issues contained in IDEA 1997. Please refer to Ohio's Model Policies and Procedures for the Education of Children with Disabilities for further information.

⊗ Denotes optional procedure/form

Introduction

This technical assistance guide has been created to respond to the language in both the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997* (IDEA '97) and Ohio's *Model Policies and Procedures for the Education of Children with Disabilities* that focuses on the development of behavior intervention plans. While this guide is intended to be a resource to intervention assistance, intervention-based assessment (IBA), multifactorial evaluation (MFE), and individualized education program (IEP) teams as they design interventions to address individual behaviors of concern, it may also be used with students who do not have IEPs.

The IDEA '97 addresses behavior as a component of the IEP in Section 614(d)(3)(B) CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL FACTORS:

"(i) In the case of a child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, when appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address that behavior"

The *Model Policies and Procedures for the Education of Children with Disabilities* requires that each IEP team determine whether there are behavioral considerations that would cause the team to address behavior as a component of the IEP (refer to Section 6: IE/LRE of this manual).

For each child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, when appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address that behavior as part of the IEP process.

- The child's behavior is described in the present levels of performance, and, if behavior is identified as a need, then the need(s) will be clearly documented in the "Needs" column with appropriate baseline data.
- The IEP team develops behavior goals and objectives, based on a review of the present levels of performance.
- The IEP, team then documents the strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports to address that behavior, which are necessary to implement behavior goals and objectives in the "Services" column.

Note: The completion of the above three steps meets the requirements of the law, in that the IEP addresses behavior.

- The IEP team may wish to develop a behavior intervention plan in order to expand the "Services" column with specific strategies as part of the IEP meeting.
- A behavior intervention plan may also be developed after the IEP conference by those persons responsible for implementing the behavior, goals, and objectives as identified on the IEP.

If the behavior intervention plan is not developed at the IEP conference, and is not part of the IEP, then it may be revised without an IEP conference. However, parents should be involved.

In developing a behavior intervention plan, follow the problem-solving process in *Model Policies and Procedures for the Education of Children with Disabilities*.

When should the student's behavior be addressed as a part of the IEP?

Consider the following questions:

1. *Is there documented evidence that the student's behavior interferes with his/her learning and/or the learning of others?*
2. *Was the student's behavior one of the primary reasons he or she was referred for a multifactorial evaluation for a suspected disability? Is there evaluation/assessment information to support behavior as a primary reason?*
3. *Were previous behavioral interventions attempted and documented?*
4. *Does the student's specialized instruction include the use of techniques that have the potential for being abused (e.g., time out, passive restraint, withdrawal of reinforcement or privileges)?*
5. *Does the student demonstrate behaviors that are unsafe to him/herself or others?*
6. *Has the student been removed from the general education environment as a result of his/her behavior?*
7. *Has the child knowingly possessed or used illegal drugs or sold or solicited the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school sponsored activity?*
8. *Has the student carried or been in possession of a weapon while at school or at a school sponsored activity?*

Assumptions About Behavior Plans

When designing behavior intervention plans, there are three basic assumptions that should guide the planning process:

- Behavior intervention plans are teaching tools
- The design of behavior intervention plans leads to positive outcomes for learners.
- The behavior intervention planning process is a collaborative problem-solving approach involving all stakeholders.

This technical assistance guide will help to answer the following three questions:

- When should the student's behavior be addressed as a part of the IEP?
- What are behavior intervention plans?
- How should a functional behavior assessment be conducted in the behavior intervention planning process?

The behavior planning process described herein will also be beneficial to schools attempting to address Am. Sub. S.B. No. 55 (Section 3313.534):

"No later than July 1, 1998, the board of education of each city, exempted village, and local school district shall adopt a policy of zero tolerance for violent, disruptive, or inappropriate behavior, including excessive truancy, and establish strategies to address such behaviors that range from prevention to intervention."

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What are behavior intervention plans?

- **Behavior intervention plans are teaching tools.**
There are four areas of focus in a behavior intervention plan: (1) Adjustment of environmental factors; (2) Decrease of interfering behaviors; (3) Acquisition of replacement behaviors; and (4) Strengthen existing skills. All behavior intervention plans should include proactive approaches to changing behavior. The purpose of a behavior intervention plan is to ensure the environment is conducive to learning and to teach the student what "to do instead."
- **The design of behavior intervention plans leads to positive outcomes for students.**
The behavior intervention plan is developed as a means of coordinating intervention activities. Discipline, when used as a *proactive* approach in the behavior intervention planning process, addresses the cause of the behavior and helps to create a safe, positive learning environment for all. Effective discipline provides appropriate logical consequences for behavior and results in long-term positive behavioral changes. Discipline does not focus on the behavior in isolation or "quick fixes." Rather, it is a learning process that provides the child with an opportunity to learn new skills so that he/she can be an effective student.
- **The behavior intervention planning process is a collaborative problem solving approach involving all stakeholders.**
A behavior intervention plan serves as a communication tool developed by a team that is made up of "stakeholders." Stakeholders, as used in this context, may mean the student, the parents/family members, general and special educators who work with the student, peers, a key administrator, and support service providers who may provide support services. These individuals know the student best and are essential to behavior planning.

How should the functional behavior assessment be conducted in the behavior intervention planning process?

Functional behavior assessment is a collaborative problem-solving process that is used to describe the "function" or purpose that is served by a student's behavior. Understanding the "function" that an impeding behavior serves for the student assists directly in designing educational programs and developing behavior plans with a high likelihood of success.

The collaborative problem-solving process is the foundation for many team processes in education including the IEP planning process, functional behavior assessment, behavior intervention planning process, and intervention-based assessment. The steps, outlined in the comparison chart and on the following pages, use the IEP Sequence as the overall organizer, demonstrating how the steps of the collaborative problem-solving process can be incorporated to assist teams in the development of a behavior intervention plan.

The following sections outline a systematic collaborative problem-solving process to guide behavior intervention planning, either as a component of the IEP or as an intervention plan for a student with or without a disability.

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Comparison Chart

IEP Sequence	Collaborative Problem-Solving Process
Step 1: Discuss Vision: Future Planning	
Step 2: Discuss Present Levels of Performance Review the evaluation results (current IEP if this is an annual review meeting), develop a long-term vision for the student, and determine the present levels of educational performance.	I. Define behavior(s) of concern II. Analyze behavior(s) of concern A. Establish baseline (likely/least likely to occur) 1. Where 2. When 3. With whom 4. Why (function/purpose of the behavior) 5. Usual response B. Identify strengths (skill strengths, staff, resources, etc.)
Step 3: Identify Specialized Needs for this IEP Determine the area(s) of the child's needs.	C. Identify needs (skill deficits, staff, resources etc.) D. Prioritize needs-What does the student need to learn and in what order?
Step 4: Identify Measurable Goals, Objectives, and Assessment Procedures Develop goals and short-term instructional objectives with accompanying criteria and evaluation procedures.	III. Set the Goal
Step 5: Identify Needed Services Determine special education and related services needs to implement each goal and accompanying objective.	IV. Develop an Action Plan A. Brainstorm possible interventions B. Select interventions C. Design an evaluation strategy
Step 6: Determine Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Determine the least restrictive environment in which to deliver the special education and related services.	V. Evaluate the Plan A. Is the plan meeting the needs of the student? B. Modify as needed
Periodic Review (at least annually).	

IEP Step 1: Discuss Vision: Future Planning

Review the vision.

- What is the long-term vision for the student?
- What are the behavior barriers interfering with reaching/progressing toward the vision?

IEP Step 2: Discuss Present Levels of Performance

Describe each behavior of concern (topography) using language that is specific, observable, and measurable. Describe the strengths of the student.

- What strengths does the student have?
- Where is the behavior most/least likely to occur (environment)?
- How often does the behavior occur (frequency)?

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- For how long does a behavioral event last (duration)?
- How long a period of time typically exists between a request and when the student begins to respond (latency)?
- How extreme is the behavior (intensity)?
- For each occurrence, with whom is the behavior most/least likely to occur?
- What is the general response of others to the behavior?
- How does the student react to others' responses?

Using the information above, write a statement clearly describing the behavior of concern.

Problem behavior stems from a variety of causes. Therefore, it is best to examine the behavior from as many perspectives as possible. Consider the following:

- Describe what usually happens in the child's environment, instruction, and relationships just before and just after the behavior of concern occurs (antecedent).
- What other information is relevant to the behavior of concern (medication, medical conditions, sleep, diet, schedule, relationships, proficiency performance interviews, etc.)?
- How does the student typically communicate wants and needs?
- What is the student's behavior history?
- What interventions and modifications have been found successful and unsuccessful with regard to the behavior of concern?
- What are the academic, curricular, self-care, and social skills that make up the student's profile?
- For what purpose(s) (function) does the student use the behavior of concern? What is the student trying to communicate with the behavior of concern? For example, is the purpose of the behavior of concern to gain objects or activities, to gain power or control, to gain or avoid/escape an interaction with an adult, peer, or teacher directed activity? Is the purpose of the behavior stimulation?

IEP Step 3: Identify Specialized Needs for the IEP

Identify what the student needs to learn and in what order. To prioritize the student's needs, consider the following questions:

- Which behaviors are likely to cause harm to the student or others?
- Which behaviors impede the learning of the student or others?
- Which behaviors occur most frequently?
- Which behaviors are most intense?

Which behavior, when effectively addressed, will have a positive impact on other behaviors of concern?

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IEP Step 4: Identify Measurable Goals, Objectives, and Assessment Procedures

Create specific, measurable annual goals and short-term objectives that relate to the behavior of concern. Identify skills to be acquired within the next year.

- What behavior could replace and serve as a more acceptable alternative to the behavior of concern?
- Does the replacement behavior serve the same function to the student as the behavior of concern?
- Will mastery of the goals/objectives enable the student to more fully participate in the general education curriculum?
- Will mastery of the goals/objectives enable the student to more fully participate in the regular educational environment?
- Have positive intervention strategies been demonstrated to be ineffective prior to the proposed use of more restrictive intervention procedures?
- Are the goals/objectives stated in terms of what the student will be able to do?
- Do the goals/objectives help build student confidence and competence, promote independence and self-advocacy, and help develop self-responsibility?
- Were cultural differences taken into account when the goals/objectives were developed?
- Can the goals/objectives in the behavior plan be generalized to other settings?
- Have criteria been established for each goal/objective for measuring success in relationship to baseline data?
- What methods will be used to evaluate whether there is an increased use of the replacement behavior and decreased use of the behavior of concern?
- Has the IEP team considered how frequently they will evaluate progress based on the frequency, intensity, and severity of behavior of concern?

IEP Step 5: Identify Needed Services

Goals and objectives must include prevention and proactive teaching strategies, as well as intervention strategies for when the behavior of concern continues to occur. Both prevention and intervention strategies must maintain the dignity of all parties.

What environmental changes have been considered?

- What accommodations, intervention techniques, and supports are needed for the student to learn and use the replacement behavior?
- Do the interventions rely on logical consequences instead of punishments?
- If necessary, have several interventions been designed to meet the diverse and unique needs of the student?
- Does research support using the selected interventions with the behavior of concern?
- How will stakeholders (including family members) be trained and supported in implementing the behavior intervention plan?
- Can the plan be held up to ethical standards?

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IEP Step 6: Determine Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled. Separate classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

- Are the replacement behaviors outlined in the intervention plan appropriate for the environments in which the plan will be implemented?
- Have strategies been included in the behavior intervention plan for re-introducing the student to the regular educational environment if the IEP team has determined that the student will be removed?
- Has the IEP team considered interventions that will increase the likelihood that the student will be educated with non-disabled peers?
- Have interventions been tried and documented prior to placement in a more restrictive environment?

Periodic Evaluation

Upon completion, the IEP team needs to implement, review, and evaluate the effectiveness of the behavior intervention plan. Based on the evaluation, the plan may need to be modified or a new plan created.

- Was the plan effective in increasing the use of the replacement behavior and decreasing the behavior of concern?
- Were the interventions appropriately applied and documented?
- Is the behavior intervention plan being implemented as designed?
- Were adjustments made as needed during the implementation phase of the plan?
- Were parents, staff, the student, and outside agencies involved in the review and revision of the behavior intervention plan?
- Has the intervention plan been implemented for a sufficient length of time?
- Has the intervention plan been continued, revised, or eliminated as a result of the periodic review?

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Functional Behavior Assessment

Student: _____ DOB: _____ School: _____ Date: _____

☐ Review Vision

Data Collection

Behavior of Concern (Description)	What Happens Before	Where (Most/least likely setting)	How Often/How Long (Time between request & response)	With Whom (Most/least likely)	Usual Response to the Behavior (Students/Adults)
Why (function or purpose)? What is the student communicating through the behavior of concern?					

*Complete one sheet per behavior of concern.

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**Functional Behavior Assessment
Additional Information**

Behavior History Interventions Attempted	Primary Mode of Communication	Other Relevant Information (e.g., medical)

IEP Team Meeting Participants:

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Behavior Intervention Plan

*Develop an Action Plan**

A. Goal Statement:

Intervention/Skills	Who Implements?	How Long?	Data Used to Measure Progress?	Who Collects Data?	Who Monitors During Implementation?	Review Schedule

*(Use one page for each goal)

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BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN

Review and Modify the Plan as Necessary

Date: _____ Student: _____

IEP Team Members _____

- Describe the student's progress toward the goal(s):
- What methods did you use to document intervention results?
(Attach charts, work samples, graphs, etc.)
- Recommendations for modifications, if any: *(If the results are such that a new plan is necessary, it is suggested that the team start at the beginning of the collaborative problem-solving process)*

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BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN
Signature Page

The functional behavior assessment and behavior plan documents can be used for both students who have IEPs or those who do not. If the behavior planning process was completed as part of an intervention design for a student who does not have an IEP, then have participants sign this form.

____/____/____ Date		
_____ Name (Print)	_____ Position	_____ Signature

____/____/____ Date		
_____ Name (Print)	_____ Position	_____ Signature

____/____/____ Date		
_____ Name (Print)	_____ Position	_____ Signature

____/____/____ Date		
_____ Name (Print)	_____ Position	_____ Signature

____/____/____ Date		
_____ Name (Print)	_____ Position	_____ Signature

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